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# Nationalism and Internationalism in Education in Europe in the 1920s through the Eyes of an American Observer

## Abstract

This article addresses the ways in which education systems responded to the aftermath of World War I with respect to education for nationalism and internationalism. It does so by drawing on theories of internationalism and through an analysis of the writings of Daniel Prescott, an American scholar who toured European schools in the middle of the 1920s. Influenced by his experience of frontline warfare as a volunteer driver in France in 1917, Prescott travelled in Austria, Czechoslovakia, England, France, Germany and Switzerland from September 1926 to June 1927 hoping to see education systems being more internationalist and less chauvinist. He interviewed prominent educationists and observed and interviewed teachers in schools, sending regular reports by letter to his sponsors and then publishing a book *Education and International Relations. A Study of the Social Forces That Determine the Influence of Education*, in 1930. The analysis of his account of his observations demonstrates that Prescott collected evidence of a growing internationalist approach to education particularly among elementary school teachers. The analysis also relates this to the contemporaneous concern to develop internationalism as a response to the nationalism at the heart of WWI.

## Introduction

Daniel Alfred Prescott (1898 - 1970) published a book in 1930 with Harvard University Press entitled *Education and International Relations. The Study of the Social Forces That Determine the Influence of Education*<sup>1</sup>. It is based on a period of travel and study in Europe from 1926 to 1927 and is introduced with these words:

Twelve years ago today I was in Europe, along the Chemin des Dames. I had felt the call to “make the world safe for democracy”. A native of Wilson’s own state, I had a holy idealism for democracy, and having read broadly, among historical novels, I felt the glory of the war crusade. I was nineteen years of age then. Six months later I was twenty-nine. That much time at the front had taught me something about warfare besides its glory<sup>2</sup>. (1930, p.1)

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<sup>1</sup> It is available online: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015020212646&view=1up&seq=6> - accessed April-October 2020)

<sup>2</sup> Prescott volunteered for the American Field Service in 1917, leaving New York in June, and serving for some 6 months as a driver in the transport section. He describes his experience in detail in letters to his mother (<https://digital.lib.umd.edu/image?pid=umd:684915&skin=alb> - accessed February 2020) where there is, perhaps not surprisingly, little sign of his enthusiasm for Wilson’s democracy and more concern to reassure his parents that he is safe and well. Similarly, neither later in the book itself nor in the reports he sent to his

Though not as vehement as Henri Barbusse, whose novel *Le Feu. Journal d'une escouade*<sup>3</sup> spoke for the French frontline soldier and was an immediate success on publication in 1916, Prescott emphasises the influence on himself of “the front and extensive contact with *poilus* [French infantry] (who) had seen four years of it” (ibid.). He goes on to explain that he began to consider the factors which might have created a “condition” in the warring countries which had led to “the orgy of killing”, and to analyse the experiences which might lead children “to distrust other peoples, to feel that war is glorious, to believe that ours is the greatest nation on earth, to feel that we have a Destiny and that other nations threaten that Destiny” (1930, p. 2). He argues that “such conditioning influences can readily be discerned” (ibid.) and he thus anticipates his use of the theoretical concept of ‘conditioning’. He had studied psychology at Tufts University, and later became a university professor in psychology. The thrust of his book is therefore to demonstrate the efficacy of an explanation of the development of education systems in terms of a theory of conditioning. There is however no hint in the letters he wrote to obtain funding and to report how he was using the funds that he had this in mind from the outset. If anything he seemed to have a Comparative Education purpose initially, and as we shall see he was interested in comparing how education systems create nationalist or internationalist ideologies.

Prescott describes how, as a young man observing the European war from across the Atlantic, he began to wonder how nations had come into conflict with each other in ways which had become “outlawed” in relationships *within* nations. He describes how the role of schooling was made very explicit:

I was told Germany was at fault (...) Their schoolmasters had spent half a century in consciously preparing the people for it, and as a result, a formidable integration of science and will was loosing destruction. (1930 p.2)

One year earlier than Prescott’s publication, in 1929, Erich Maria Remarque<sup>4</sup> had published *Im Westen Nichts Neues* where the narrator tells how the schoolmaster Kantorek lectured the boys “until the whole of our class went, under his shepherding, to the District Commandant and volunteered” (chapter 1). Speaking of the Kantoreks of the world, Remarque’s narrator says:

The idea of authority, which they represented, was associated in our minds with a greater insight and a more humane wisdom. But the first death we saw shattered this belief (...). While they taught that duty to one’s country is the greatest thing, we

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sponsors - discussed below - is there any further allusion to an ‘American’ perspective except insofar as he occasionally ensures that his readers know sufficient European context to follow his academic analysis.

<sup>3</sup> Barbusse (1873-1935) was already an established author when, in 1914, he enlisted in the French army. He was sent to the frontline and in 1916 won the prestigious Prix Goncourt with his novel describing life at the front (translated as *Under Fire. The story of a squad*).

<sup>4</sup> Remarque - real name Remark - (1898-1970), is usually described as a pacifist writer. He served on the German western front in 1917, where he was wounded. His novel is based on his own experience and was an immediate worldwide success, being made into a Hollywood film in 1930, *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

already knew that death-throes are stronger. But for all that we were no mutineers, no deserters, no cowards -- they were free with all these expressions. We loved our country as much as they; we went courageously into every action; but we also distinguished the false from the true, we had suddenly learned to see. And we saw that there was nothing of their world left. We were all at once terribly alone; and alone we must see it through. (1929/1963 p. 14)

Remarque's critique of the Kantoreks suggests there is some substance in what Prescott had been told. Yet initially, Prescott says, he had not seen any differences among the warring nations, which all seemed to be pursuing the same ideals. There is moreover a trace of the Kantorekian glorification of patriotism by previous generations in his own education traditions, in Prescott's own admission that he felt 'the glory of the war crusade'. In parallel to the experience of Remarque's generation, this was soon exposed to reality:

Life had to be reëvaluated in terms of death, of devastation, in terms of hatred and bitterness. Of course, young men will always enter war in the game spirit, but they cannot continue long to kill fellow men and lose their comrades in this spirit. (1930, p. 1)

Prescott's wanted to apply conditioning theory to explain what he had seen but my purpose is different. It is to use his presentation of the data he collected and his remarks on curricula and policies as an gateway to education practices and to examine the observations and interpretations he made of how education systems were responding to nationalism and the calls for internationalism. I shall analyse Prescott's work from his position as a contemporaneous observer of schooling in a period of change when the role of education in creating national identity and patriotism was under close scrutiny and, through his observations, obtain some insight into how education were responding systems in principle and in practice to the events of war and peace.

For it might be expected that, after the Great War with its extremes of nationalism, there would be a search for alternative approaches, that the internationalism which had begun to grow in the late nineteenth century, and was then suffocated by the War, might flourish again. We shall see how Prescott looked for new ways of educational thinking about international cooperation and peace in an interdependent world community, and found these largely in elementary education.

## **Internationalism**

Internationalism has not been widely treated in research and scholarship in education nor, as Kuehl (2009) says, in historiography. It was, as Sluga and Clavin say, rarely more than 'a whisper in the narratives of the past' (2016: 3). but it is a theme in the study of International Relations which Halliday's work strongly reflects (1988, 2009). Kuehl shows that the lack of interest has led to a lack of clarity in definitions by historians. Coming from the discipline of International Relations, Halliday says (1988, p. 188) that the complexity of the different

analytical types of internationalism and its changing connotations, are best caught in the notion of the 'cluster concept', where there is no single core meaning. Within the cluster there are several concepts, some of them related to the typologies suggested by more than one scholar, and some particular to one typology.

Liberal internationalism is described by Halliday as:

a generally optimistic approach based upon the belief that independent societies and autonomous individuals can through greater interaction and co-operation evolve towards common purposes, chief among these being peace and prosperity. (1988, p. 192)

Holbraad too links liberal internationalism with "confidence in the rational and moral qualities of human beings" (2003, p. 39) and "faith in progress towards more orderly social relations", but it will become clear that this does not mean a belief that the progress is inevitable.

From an historiographical perspective, Kuehl (2009) argues that liberal internationalism is a phrase, often used without definition, that is associated with periods both pre- and post- 1914-1918, and, agreeing with Halliday's definitional statement, that it was associated with peace movements before the war and peace settlement after it.

The second type of internationalism is what Holbraad (2003) calls 'socialist internationalism', in which he distinguishes 'reformist' from 'revolutionary'. Others also refer to the link with socialism (Kuehl, 2009) or to a 'radical or revolutionary' internationalism (Halliday, 1988). The distinction between revolutionary and reformist is a matter of different kinds of response to nationalism. Where all other types of internationalism, including reformist socialism, accept nationalism as a given, as an inevitability, revolutionary socialist internationalism posits a basis in a non-nationalist solidarity of the proletariat, believing that class affinities are stronger than national allegiances. It is often argued that class affinities did not withstand the demands of nationalism at the beginning of the 1914-18 war and undermined this non-national type of internationalism (e.g. Lademacher, 1988)<sup>5</sup>, but as we shall see there were new inventions of it in some of what Prescott observed.

For Kuehl, the historical perspective demonstrates that an earlier distinction was also feasible between what he calls (following Herman, 1969) the 'community internationalists' and the 'polity internationalists'. The former focused on the autonomy and interdependency of human beings and took action on this basis, whereas the latter focused on juridical and governmental issues. Prescott referred throughout his book to international interdependency and cooperation, notions which were very much part of the discourse of the time.

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<sup>5</sup> Hobsbawm (1988) would however contest this view. He points out that in fact workers at the beginning and during the 1914-1918 war did not suffer the same traumatic sense of conflict between international movement and national identification as did their leaders..

Two other types of internationalism have been suggested: the hegemonic and the conservative. Halliday (1988 p.193) argues that liberal internationalism has been challenged by hegemonic internationalism:

the belief that the integration of the world is taking place on asymmetrical, unequal terms, and that this is the only possible and indeed desirable way for such an integration to take place.

The obvious manifestation of this has been colonialism, but it is also present in contemporary international relations dominated by a very few states and symbolised in the dominance of the English language created by the British Empire in the past and the American Empire today.

Finally, although it is not mentioned by other writers, conservative internationalism, in Holbraad's view, is older than the other types, which have perhaps more explicit and recognisable ideologies. One form of conservative internationalism can be seen in the "awareness of a shared interest in security and a common interest in survival" (2003 p. 12) among states resisting dominant powers such as Napoleonic France. Another form is that of "solidarity" among states manifest in alliances and leagues at times of critical challenge such as the Holy Alliance against revolution after the French Revolution. This kind of internationalism is above all political although it may be linked with a moral stance – as liberal internationalism is – for example, in the battle with Bolshevism after 1917.

The cluster concept is, then, complex, but Halliday suggests that all types of internationalism nonetheless share three characteristics. First there is a recognition that there is an internationalisation of the world i.e. a binding together through communications and trade. The second is the cooperative management of the impact of economic internationalisation on political processes. Whether government or civil society, whether feminists or opponents of capitalism, all cooperate more closely as a consequence of the phenomenon of economic internationalisation and globalisation. The third characteristic is of a different nature. It is the normative assertion that the first two are a good thing since they promote understanding, peace, prosperity "or whatever the particular advocate holds to be most dear" (1988 p. 188). The state and nationalism, in this view, are only legitimate within internationalism if they promote some moral values.

A fourth general feature of internationalism is the association with democracy. Goldmann argues that there is an affinity between the two but that there are limits to this comparison. Internationalism does not pre-suppose the establishment of a democratic world state but rather the creation of cooperation among states. On the other hand, internationalists such as Woodrow Wilson, says Goldmann, assume internationalism and democracy are inseparable, and here we are reminded of Prescott's reference to his own Wilson-inspired "holy idealism for democracy". For, according to Goldmann:

[It is part of] the tradition of internationalist thinking to consider law, organization, exchange, and communication to be more likely to lead to peace and security if states are democratic than if they are authoritarian. (1994 p. 54)

## Internationalism in education in the 1920s

The theoretical basis for the analysis which follows is Williams' concept of the 'structure of feeling', the "formally held and systematic beliefs" and the "meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt" (Williams 1977: 132). By close reading, we shall see how certain values and meanings are present in Prescott's text and also in the discourse of the society in which he lived.

### *Internationalism defined through nationalism*

A first indication of how internationalism in the 1920s was defined by contrasting it with nationalism can be seen in Barbusse's statement on the aims of the *Clarté* group (1920 p. 9). In his analysis of the contemporary world he argues:

Le capitalisme déclenche le nationalisme, et le nationalisme s'appuie sur la guerre comme la paix sur la justice<sup>6</sup>.

Nationalism is the opposite of peace, and war is the opposite of justice. The alternative is to replace nationalism with internationalism which implies that internationalism is equated with peace. The association of nationalism with patriotism – and therefore with war – can be replaced by associating internationalism with humanism, and with peace:

L'infaillible raison nous commande de substituer l'idéal humain à l'idéal patriotique et l'internationalisme au nationalisme<sup>7</sup>.

The *Clarté* movement established by Barbusse took its political doctrine from the Third International (Barbusse, 1920: 133) and the socialist movement.

At about the same time as Barbusse, John Maynard Keynes in his *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1920) described the nationalist atmosphere and the characters of the negotiators in Paris:

The future life of Europe was not their concern; its means of livelihood was not their anxiety. Their preoccupations, good and bad alike, related to frontiers and nationalities, to the balance of power, to imperial aggrandizements, to the future enfeeblement of a strong and dangerous enemy, to revenge, and to the shifting by the victors of their unbearable financial burdens on to the shoulders of the defeated.  
(Chapter 4)

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<sup>6</sup> 'Capitalism unleashes nationalism and nationalism is based on war just as peace is based on justice' (my translation)

<sup>7</sup> 'Infallible reason requires us to substitute the human ideal for the patriotic ideal and internationalism for nationalism.' (My translation)

Keynes is clear that the people in power – especially Clemenceau, with his memory of the humiliation of France by Germany in 1870 – were fixated on national concerns and, as Barbusse would argue, on the inevitability of patriotism and war<sup>8</sup>. Internationalism – and the peace associated with it by Barbusse – was certainly not on the agenda of these powerful individuals, although the idea of a League of Nations struggled into being nonetheless, and those who supported the League saw education systems as crucial sources of support and development.

### *The League of Nations*

Prescott devoted a chapter of his book to the League of Nations and, like others in the 1920s, saw it as a source of hope and change. The fact that the United States did not become a member - and thereby weakened the future of the League - does not appear to have reduced his enthusiasm, and is perhaps related to his 'European' perspective and the absence of an 'American' perspective noted above.

McCarthy (2011) describes the League of Nations as a manifestation of “liberal internationalism” although she offers no detailed analysis of what she means by this phrase. Halliday, as we saw, links liberal internationalism with optimism, and this is echoed in Prescott’s view of the League as “putting before the world high ideals of international relations” which he says are mentioned in schools and are “seeping into the minds of the children” (1930 p. 104). Holbraad’s (2003) account links the League with rationality, morality and progress often associated - as we see with McCarthy – with periods both pre- and post-1914-1918, with peace movements before the war and peace settlement after it.

Fuchs (2007) describes in some detail the networks which the League of Nations supported, both the informal networks – which he suggests need to be analysed by mathematical modelling – and the formal networks which are his main focus. In the 1920s, he says, there were four networks relevant to education and apparent in the institutional structure and educational discourse. One related to child welfare, a second to peace and moral education, a third to university relations, and a fourth to the teaching profession (Fuchs, 2007: 200). However Fuchs does not analyse the ideas in circulation, only the mechanisms, which for example led to attempts to introduce an international textbook.

On the other hand, analysis of educational ideas in Britain provides an example of the success of the League of Nations. Here, it is the League of Nations Union which is most important. It was formed in 1918 to support acceptance of the League of Nations itself, and its Reconstruction Committee recommended “organizing research and discussion on matters of international concern and influencing education in schools and universities so as to increase

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<sup>8</sup> In a letter to his mother, 14 May 1919, Keynes writes:

It must be weeks since I’ve written a letter to anyone: - but I’ve been utterly worn out, partly by work, partly by depression at the evil around me. I’ve been so miserable for the last two or three weeks; this peace is outrageous and impossible (...)

<https://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/online-resources/online-exhibitions/mothers-of-kingsmen>



public relations and promote a just appreciation of the principles and spirit of the League” (Elliott, 1977: 131). Elliot’s account of the teaching of history in the 1920s charts considerable success in schools with support from government – not immediately but eventually – and from intellectuals such as Bertrand Russell, who argued that “history should be taught in the same way in all countries of the world” using a textbook produced by the League of Nations (cited in Elliott, 1977: 136). However, this initiative ultimately failed. For, despite there being some success in the 1930s leading to the adoption of an international declaration on history teaching in 1937, it was, as a consequence of the Second World War, never implemented (Elliott, 1977).

The particular failure was a symptom of a more general opposition with accusations of the League being “international, pacifist, anti-patriotic and anti-empire”, a combination of adjectives which came from a Conservative Member of Parliament in 1927 (Elliott 1977 p. 139). This opposition increased in the 1930s, and towards the end of that decade, the strength of the work of the LNU was failing fast. Elliott concludes his analysis with these words:

The mistaken assumption of those distinguished British educationalists and classroom teachers who subscribed to the Union’s ideas, was to imagine that a newly-formed pressure group, with such fundamentally reformist objectives, could hope to influence the deep-rooted conservatism of English educational institutions. (1977: 140)

Prescott noted this conservatism too, especially in the powerful Public Schools, and how it was inimical to internationalism, for “it can see no reason for teaching internationalism or even for giving information about current problems.” The argument then runs that education provides character training, and “honor and intelligence” will suffice to solve the problems of the future, and that this is superior to “exposing the child to controversial material that will make him (sic) a partisan of one idea or the other” (1930 p. 19).

Elliott uses the term ‘reformist’ about the Union’s ideas, which suggests an internationalism which is different from “liberal internationalism”, if we follow Holbraad cited above. Reformist and revolutionary internationalism was pursued in Russia in parallel and in competition with the liberal internationalism of the League of Nations, and we shall see below how, for some contemporaries of Prescott, internationalism was not only associated with optimism, peace and anti-patriotism but also with socialism or communism.

One concrete realisation of the League of Nations’ principles was the founding in 1924 in Geneva of the first international school for the children of employees of the League, “in response to a view that one of the reasons that the world is so divided is because of nationalism and that an effective way of combating this reality would be through international education” (Cambridge and Thompson, 2004 p. 170).

The interesting question is then what was happening in schools in general, whether directly founded by internationalists or influenced by internationalist thinking, and Prescott’s work helps us to answer this question.

## Prescott's investigation

Prescott's ambition was considerable:

I wish to describe the different factors that, by their interplay, condition large masses of the world's population to this or that attitude. I wish to show why none of the nations visited is now homogeneous in outlook and feeling, to point out the directions in which the greatest changes of attitude are taking place, and to account for these in terms of the earlier experiences of the groups. (p. 3)<sup>9</sup>

He stressed that he was not repeating the analysis of courses and textbooks which had been done before and which was then continuing under the aegis of the League of Nations<sup>10</sup>. In fact he is rather critical of textbook analysis, saying that what one finds in textbooks can be the opposite of what one observes in schools and vice versa: "it is the "spirit" of the schools which counts most" (p.3)<sup>11</sup>.

As said above, his approach is through social psychology and he warns that "certain psychological terminology" will be used, explaining his premises and assumptions in some detail as he seems to believe that his readers will have difficulty with his approach. Attitudes, he says, are "the result of the conditioning process, but they grow out of the multiple association of things and events with the conditions of life of the individual" (p. 8) and with his references to 'conditioning' Prescott was clearly drawing on his psychology studies where presumably he had come across Pavlovian conditioning and other work of this kind stemming from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He does not claim to have included all the influences on children and young people but only those which are most significant in developing and changing attitudes. He emphasises that he wants to show change towards "better international attitudes" and that "those who are interested in education as an aid to the pacific solution of international difficulties will find in this study an insight into school conditions that will lead them to greater definiteness of effort directed toward more specific ends" (p. 9). He is optimistic and believes there is "a growing public opinion insistent on a sane conciliatory internationalism" (p.9).

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<sup>9</sup> Prescott is, in today's terminology, no 'essentialist' reducing nations to stereotyped homogenous entities, and in the Prescott archives at the University of Maryland, there is evidence that he also carried out empirical research on children's attitudes to war, but this was not published. On the other hand he published, together with a Polish academic, research she had carried out a decade earlier and held back - buried in the ground - because it was too sensitive (Baumgarten and Prescott, 1928).

<sup>10</sup> The focus was on textbooks for teaching history and in 1925 the *International Committee on Intellectual Co-Operation*, of the League of Nations suggested that there should be comparative analysis of textbooks in order to revise them and to avoid "essential misunderstandings of other countries" (quoted in Pingel, 2010: 9). For a more detailed history of textbook analysis, from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, see UNESCO (1949).

<sup>11</sup> He does not refer to any specific work but he may have been familiar with a contemporary book by Jonathan Scott, *The Menace of Nationalism in Education*, published in 1926 and largely based on textbook analysis.

However, despite the undoubted interest of Prescott's approach, it is the data which he collected which is my focus, and the discourse of his presentation of the data which themselves reveal the structure of feeling of the time.

Prescott's data collection is not explained in his book but can be traced from the letters he wrote at the time to his mentor, Henry W. Holmes, Dean of the Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, and in a monthly report to Professor Wilson, a representative of the funding body, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial. The drafts of the letters and reports are in the University of Maryland Prescott archive. The letters to Dean Holmes are more informal and often repeat and add more detail to the reports sent to Professor Wilson.

Prescott travelled in Europe between September 1926 and July 1927 (see appendix). He used a variety of techniques to gather information – document analysis, interviews, visits to schools – and his list of interviewees is impressive both in quantity and in terms of the key people he managed to meet. This can be seen from one of his monthly reports to Dean Holmes (Nov 22 1926), where he described his interviewees in Britain and mentioned, *inter alia*: Lord Eustace Percy, President of the Board of Education; Mr Richards, H.M. Chief Inspector; H. A. L. Fisher who had “procured the passage of the famous Education Acts of 1918”; Sir Michael Sadler; and Professor Arnold Toynbee. Fisher, Sadler and Toynbee are familiar names to educationists in Britain until the present day.

By today's standards, the lack of detail in the book about the methods of data collection and analysis and the absence of quotation from interviews and documents, with close analysis of their meaning and significance, would be problematic. Prescott does not for example quote his informants and at best this would have been based on note-taking, given the lack of mechanical recording at the time. Such a critique would however be anachronistic and it is important to note that the book was published in the prestigious Harvard Studies in Education series, doubtless with a full process of refereeing, which implies that the approach satisfied the quality demands of the time.

The book itself consists of 11 chapters, the first being an Introduction. The following seven chapters each discuss the ‘social forces’ which influence attitudes to international relations: tradition, national consciousness, class consciousness, the organized opinion of teachers, new psychological and pedagogical principles, organizations external to official education, and the League of Nations. Chapter 9 deals with ‘The Interplay of Social Forces’ and chapter 10 with ‘Educational Implications’, followed by a ‘Conclusion’. In this last chapter. Prescott writes of the new revolution in travel and communications and, in phrases which might have been written today, he says that “The world has become a community and therefore has common interests and a common knowledge of the doings of everyone” (p. 136).

### **Prescott's search for and articulation of ‘internationalism’ in education**

From the first page of the book, with its description of his own experiences in wartime, and with the introduction into the first chapter of his theoretical framework of ‘conditioning’, Prescott makes clear that he is looking for ways in which the ‘conditions’ of schooling might create ‘international understanding’ instead of the ‘international lunacy’ out of which war had emerged. He also wanted to know if educators themselves were aware of the processes involved:

Because of all this background of experience, I was eager to go abroad to study conditions in the schools of the various European nations. To see whether educational leaders there were awake to the interplay of forces that had made people the pawns of a huge international lunacy. I wished to learn from them if possible what steps an educator should take to secure and maintain a realistic yet wholesome international understanding on the part of the school population, who are the next generation of citizens. (p. 2)

Unlike his references to conditioning, he had no theory of internationalism or nationalism. His discourse is simply part of the structure of feeling in which, as we saw above, internationalism and peace were contrasted with nationalism and war. Inevitably his interpretations of what he saw and presented as evidence for ‘international understanding’ were influenced by the discourse around him as well as his personal experience at the front line. The latter motivates him, the former provides him with the means of describing what he saw during the war and during his European tour. His phrase ‘international understanding’ recalls the discourse of ‘internationalism’ and it is important to analyse his discourse and concepts in order to better understand his accounts and analyses of his empirical investigations. It is however this lack of theory which is useful for my purposes since this dimension of his book reflects ‘naively’, or atheoretically, the structure of feeling about internationalism and the arguments and data he refers to are those of his time and place.

Prescott uses the word “internationalism” on only two occasions, the first time in his introduction:

There is now a certain leaven at work gradually permeating schools. It is a growing public opinion insistent on a sane conciliatory internationalism, insistent that the schools bring up a generation of pupils who will try the experiment of peace and coöperation in the place of war and force. (p. 9).

The adjective “conciliatory” is one of two key words here, the other being “coöperation”<sup>12</sup>, and both are part of finding “constructive solutions of (the) international problems” (p. 7)<sup>13</sup>.

His second use of “internationalism” (p. 19) is in the context of discussing the role of education. In this case, he says that “traditional education” although it has “no elements of

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<sup>12</sup> This is the spelling he uses throughout the book.

<sup>13</sup> On another occasion the nouns and adjectives are reversed in the phrase “international conciliation and cooperation” (p.47).

chauvinism or imperialism (...) can see no reason for teaching internationalism or even for giving information about current problems". "Tradition" is one of the negative factors he identifies as influencing education, and this statement suggests that "teaching internationalism" is what he thinks schools should do and that this is more than, a step further than, "giving information".

There are in addition nominal phrases used which are equivalent to internationalism including "international understanding", referred to above, or "international attitudes" (p. 124). A key adjective linked with both phrases is "wholesome" which first appears in the introduction quoted above. "Wholesome" is also used of "coöperation" (p. 127):

the evolution of human society has been toward wholesome coöperation within larger and larger groups, toward the outlawry of force as a means of settling disputes in ever-widening areas, and toward the substitution of law for war.

When he talks of 'international relations', the second element of the book's title, he emphasises the 'interdependence of nations' which 'tradition' denies (p. 23):

(tradition) even withholds from (children) many other facts that demonstrate the extreme interdependence of nations at the present time and the multiple causes of international friction.

Here 'interdependence' is juxtaposed with 'causes of friction', a friction which, as he emphasises at other points in the text, requires 'conciliation' and 'coöperation'.

In the concluding chapter, he refers to the arrival of the airship, the Graf Zeppelin, in New Jersey (September 1929) which coincides with his completion of the book, and he uses this event to repeat a point made in several places earlier: the effects of science on world interdependence. He uses phrases which would today be collocated with 'globalisation' and introduces the idea of a world community:

Science is working another revolution, a revolution even more significant socially than the industrial revolution. Distance is being annihilated. In twenty-one days of elapsed time an airship has circumnavigated the world, has completed a journey that is the earnest of a still further shrinkage in the size of the globe. (...) Although the giant dirigible has been in her hangar less than an hour, the world knows all about it (...). The world has become a community and therefore has common interests and common knowledge of the doings of everyone. This remarkable flight was not accomplished by the skill and daring of one small group of people. (...) In other words every nation is dependent upon the coöperation of other nations for the success of any large project that it may undertake. (p. 136-137)

The emphasis on interdependence is a thread throughout the book and collocates frequently with 'coöperation' as here. He goes on to contrast 'international coöperation' with 'chaos':

Only international coöperation prevents chaos from overwhelming the great interdependent community that is the world; only mutual assistance makes possible

the maintenance of present standards of living or the completion of any great undertaking. (p.137)

In this passage the interdependence and coöperation are economic, but he also refers to the importance of 'intellectual coöperation' in his chapter on the League of Nations, which had established (in January 1926) the 'International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation and a Sub-Committee of Experts for the Instruction of Children and Youth in the Existence and Aims of the League of Nations', whose recommendations he includes as an appendix, and whose procedures he describes in detail.

We thus see how the collocations are created: internationalism/ interdependence/ cooperation/ peace. It is important to note however that he criticises some versions of internationalism. He speaks approvingly of Woodrow Wilson's enunciation of 'high-minded international ideals' (p. 104), and as we saw above had quoted Wilson in his introduction, but he sees "an almost fanatical worship" of a 'new world' ideal based upon 'brotherly love' as an extreme position, which contrasts with the opposite extreme of the "selfish national individualism and international anarchy of 1914" (p. 121). So we can add 'high-mindedness' to the collocations but not 'new world' and 'brotherly love', and certainly not 'international anarchy'.

The analysis of the relationship of internationalism with nationalism is expanded at several points. First he argues that there are two kinds of national consciousness. One is 'selfish national individualism' and the other is 'humanistic':

National consciousness is of two types. The old type encourages the selfish national individualism that admits no law which it must obey and normality which it should respect. Its own good is the highest law, and in working for this good each citizen reaches his own finest model expression. The newer type of national awareness is humanistic in its ideal and seeks to have its nation work for the common good in a world of consciously interdependent states. The first type reenforces the influence of tradition, the second strives for new educational values to be brought to fruition through a reorganisation of both the materials and methods of instruction. (p. 121).

He thus adds 'national humanistic awareness' to the collocations of internationalism, through the link with interdependence. It is humanistic nationalism which is associated with 'new educational values'<sup>14</sup>. It is humanistic nationalism which is pursued by 'the laboring class', and this statement begins to make a link with socialism:

the laboring class suffered the severest trials of war under the old *regime* of international anarchy and found the doors of opportunity closed by the traditional

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<sup>14</sup> It is strange that he makes no explicit reference to the New Education movement which was strong in the 1920s, and was based in England where he interviewed a lot of people. He alludes, in Chapter 4 on "Class Consciousness", to "new-type schools and experimental schools which are usually progressive, pacifist and internationally minded" (p. 45), but he does not go any further and his list of interviewees does not include people from New Education. On the other hand he does devote most of Chapter 7 to the influence in England of the League of Nations Union as an example of "Organizations external to official education".

forms of education. With them self-interest urges the necessity of educational reorganisation that will prepare them for greater participation in government and open to them the way to a full enjoyment of the world in which they live. Since they feel that none of these is possible while so much of the fruits of their labor is sacrificed to the god of war, they are, therefore, the strong proponents of nationalism that recognises the common goals of all humanity and subordinates its selfish interests to the common good. (p. 122).

Nationalism shall not be completely repudiated but shall be subordinated to internationalism. In other words, the relationship of nationalism, and patriotism, to internationalism and international interdependence is, first, a matter of priorities:

The relationships of other states to (the individual's) nation's past and to his hopes for the national future decide the nature of his thinking and feeling about those other states. In other words, international ideals are most often based upon a desire for national well-being, and other nations are evaluated in terms of their probable influence upon the prosperity and position of one's own nation. (p. 24)

In his chapter on the League of Nations, an organisation for which he has high hopes<sup>15</sup>, he refers to the "feeling and ideal with which its members are working and the reasonableness of their approach" (p. 115). To illustrate this he quotes from a League of Nations document which defines the notion of patriotism:

to imbue the child with a deep and lasting affection for its family and country remains today, as in former times, the first principle of sound education. But a true patriotism understands the patriotism of others; and a recognition of the necessity and omnipresence of coöperation both within and without the State must be emphasised in any education that is to fit young persons for modern life. (p. 115)

Furthermore, in the chapter on The Organized Opinion of Teachers, he quotes approvingly a document produced by teachers in England and what they say about patriotism:

A sense of world citizenship has to be created. President Wilson told a committee at the Paris Peace Conference that he "looked forward to the time when men would be as ashamed of being disloyal to humanity as they were now of being disloyal to their country". (p. 57)

What internationalism might mean in practice, in education at least, is also discussed in this chapter. He suggests that teachers who are 'internationally minded' can act in various ways to spread internationalism, and suggests that teachers are beginning to realise that a "campaign for international confidence and coöperation" by teachers of every nation would "simplify the peace problem within a comparatively short time" because, he seems to imply, such actions

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<sup>15</sup> See: p. 105: "a growing international idealism in youth may change markedly the whole complexion of the League within a half-century" and p. 104: "high ideals of international relationships, and these are the ideals that are mentioned in the schools, that are seeping into the minds of the children.")

are “indicative of the nature of teachers’ influence” in the classroom” (p. 54). He then gives a detailed ‘excellent example’ from England (where all of the teachers of the country have joined in signing a “Declaration concerning the schools of Britain and the peace of the world”). He also writes approvingly and in detail of similar actions in France where teachers are concerned in particular to ensure that textbooks are not “subversive to the ‘will to peace’ or to the ‘broader patriotism’” (p. 68).

More specific discussion of the role of education as “an aide to the pacific solution of international difficulties” (p. 9) and its methods for doing so are discussed in the chapter on Educational Implications. He mainly focuses on a “scientific” pedagogy based on psychology. He emphasises “de-emotionalizing the setting in which international problems are seen” (p. 132), because “the emotions unseat reason; they cut down the breadth of view with regard to these problems” (p. 132) and takes the English “central schools” as his example. However, he also senses that the feeling of interdependence “is not universally accompanied by a feeling of security”. There is an undertone of fear “an unexpressed and vague apprehension at the thought of being dependent on other people who were not altogether understood”, and that in schools there is recognition of the interdependence “without being sure of what attitude the children should adopt upon understanding it” (p. 137)

In the Conclusion chapter, he re-affirms the importance of cooperation among nations since only such international cooperation will prevent “chaos from overwhelming the great interdependent community that is the world” (p. 137). He is heartened to have found, in contrast to the ‘provincial American attitude’, that European schools, especially in England, are beginning to recognize the interdependence. However he also senses that the feeling of interdependence “is not universally accompanied by a feeling of security”. There is an undertone of fear “an unexpressed and vague apprehension at the thought of being dependent on other people who were not altogether understood”, and that in schools there is recognition of the interdependence “without being sure of what attitude the children should adopt upon understanding it” (p. 137)

His final words of the conclusion do not suggest a specific attitude. He emphasizes, rather, that pupils should know about how science is making the world an interdependent community “that must choose between law with international cooperation and anarchy with self-destruction” and argues that it is an unemotional factual approach which is needed rather than “an abstract idealization of humanity or a vague cosmopolitanism that avoids any loyalty whatsoever” (p. 139). This is the first and only reference to cosmopolitanism and it seems to be another criticism of an internationalism without ‘the broader patriotism’ which is subordinate but crucial to peace, a view of internationalism which needs to be placed in the context of socialism and communism.

This then is Prescott’s discourse. What did he observe during his tours of education systems in different countries, what data does he cite to support his arguments?



## Nationalism and internationalism in schools

In his book, Prescott presents his interpretations in general terms but explains that they are “based upon extensive interviews with a large number of actual teachers” and other interviews with people responsible for the administration of schools and “some schools were also visited” (p. 46)<sup>16</sup>.

Chapter 3 is entitled ‘National Consciousness’ and he discusses how this is developed, taking the post-war situation in Germany as his example. Citing writings from Prussia and Saxony, he explains how teachers in Berlin are being trained in courses lasting three days and gives the content of specimen courses. The foundation for this activity is the argument, made by the Minister of Education in Prussia and in a second document issued by the ministry of education in Saxony, that the new Weimar Republic needs to be supported by an emphasis on *Kulturpolitik*. One interpretation of this is nationalistic, rejecting the idea of the ‘good European’ as ‘a pious wish but no reality’ (p. 35); here he is referring to a pamphlet produced by the *Zentral Institute (sic) für Erziehung und Unterricht*. Another interpretation is that of the Saxon ministry document which says that, in Prescott’s translation, “the cultivation of German thought does not stand in contradiction to the spirit of international reconciliation, the service of which Article 148 of the Constitution makes as much a duty of all German schools as the fostering of German national feeling” (p. 37). The impact of these two extreme positions in schools on pupils and their attitudes towards international problems is clearly different and can be found in similar but less clear-cut and contrasting ways in the other countries he has visited: England, France, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia.

## Internationalism and socialism in schools

As we saw above, internationalism was and is, in one of its forms, strongly related to socialism. Prescott’s views on socialism are on the whole positive. This needs to be seen first in the context of his general remarks about elementary and secondary schools in Chapter 4 “Class consciousness”:

Teachers come, in general, from the social class that they serve (...) Teachers bring with them to the schools attitudes already formulated about social, political and international matters – attitudes formulated on the basis of their own experience, and especially their experience of the late war. (...) So one finds the elementary schools, internationally, stamped with a certain mark – they are the schools of the people. Also one finds the classical secondary schools marked by another spirit. They are the strongholds of the old nationalist traditions. (p. 44-45)

He asserts - and here we must assume he is referring to his data - that Catholic schools in France or the classical Gymnasias in Prussia “leave international problems where they were in

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<sup>16</sup> Prescott did plan and partially carry out, at the time of his other kinds of data collection, an empirical study of children’s attitudes and concepts but this was never completed (see footnote 9).

1914” (p. 43), but the “schools of the people” are marked by something other than traditional nationalism, by something arising from the war. It is interesting that he also contrasts them with “new-type schools and experimental schools” in the same paragraph, which are “progressive, pacifist, internationally minded”. Perhaps he considers these schools to be relatively insignificant despite their having some of the same characteristics he finds subsequently in the “schools of the people”; it remains unclear<sup>17</sup>.

The schools which serve the common people are where Prescott sees new hope, new purpose and international reconciliation (p. 46). The schools are “talking, thinking, teaching peace” because the teachers have shared hardship, suffering and bereavement with people of “the enemy nations”. His convictions are clear in the following statement:

These teachers are becoming great moulders of public opinion among a group that will be increasingly important in world affairs – the working group. In places the teachers are furnishing the intelligent spiritual leadership of the Socialist or Labor Party; everywhere they are shaping the opinions and attitudes of future voters. (p. 47)

He then goes on to discuss approvingly the “aggressive, extensive educational program” of the socialists which will “build a strong feeling against war and in favour of international conciliation and cooperation”. This is contrasted with the conservatism of tradition illustrated by an event five years previously in England, which he says optimistically (naively?) “probably could not happen there now”. He quotes from a book, *Wider Aspects of Education*, the attempt by two Public School masters to introduce contemporary affairs into the curriculum, and the intervention by the War Office which was afraid that a liberal education would prejudice boys’ attitudes to The Officers’ Training Course. This incident is examined by Parker (1987: 22-24) although Parker does not cite the book Prescott had read.

He contrasts this example with Vienna, where ‘the Socialists’ have come into power, and “tremendous change of policy” in school methods has occurred. He describes in some detail these methods and stresses that “these schools have a peculiar flavor with respect to the attitude about war that grows directly out of their class consciousness” (p. 49). He had looked at children’s work, particularly that done on Armistice Day under the title ‘Nicht Wieder Krieg - No More War’, which contrasted with the glorification of war and hero-worship found in some other countries<sup>18</sup>.

He also refers to the policies and statements of a Socialist State Councilor for Education in the Canton of Geneva who requested that speakers invited into schools for the celebration of

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<sup>17</sup> In a letter to Dean Holmes of 17<sup>th</sup> March 1926, before he began his study in Europe, Prescott referred to information he had accumulated about ‘experimental schools’ and at that point was proposing a study of such schools, but this idea then disappears.

<sup>18</sup> Although he refers only briefly to the political situation, Prescott was in fact observing the effects of a major school reform whose aims included the introduction of stronger democratic principles and new forms of schooling as part of the general social reform in the first post-war years, later referred to as ‘das rote Wien’ (Red Vienna) - <http://www.dasrotewien.at/seite/wiener-schulreform>  
[https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Schulreform\\_im\\_%22Roten\\_Wien%22](https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Schulreform_im_%22Roten_Wien%22)

the liberation of Geneva should not emphasise militarism but social conditions, and the singing of patriotic songs which are not “warlike”. He then gives another example from Geneva of a campaign to remove from schools pictures encouraging bellicose attitudes in children.

His remark at the end of this chapter on Class Consciousness is that the examples and other data he refers to “reveal the quality of thinking about war in the minds of the common people of Europe”. The latter is expressing itself in an organized way through “the Socialist party and the doings of those of its members who come into office” (p. 52). That he thinks this is a different matter from a communist way of thinking about internationalism, is evident from one of his letters to Dean Holmes sent during the early stages of his fieldwork (10 December 1926). He first says that “socialism amongst the teachers is the thing that is carrying with it the spirit of international good-will” and elementary school teachers are almost all in this group. He describes in more detail than in the book and with warm approval what he had seen in Austria and in particular in Vienna with respect to new schools and the wider reforms in housing, health care and hygiene. It was surprising “to see that socialism actually in the harness is finding a practical way of realizing a great many of those ideals that we have always regarded as American, but to be realized only in Heaven or after many centuries.” On the other hand he is very critical of what he heard from ‘clerical schools’ in France. Realizing that he had perhaps been naïve, he says he now sees how “the church, for the sake of maintaining its own international power, is glad to set nations against each other by teaching in each chauvinistic nationalism full of hate” and how the church develops scepticism of international agencies” which are seeking solutions to international problems.

The socialism of the elementary school teachers This is in sharp contrast to teachers in secondary schools who, despite the “very fine type of education, in many ways much superior to our own secondary schools”, oppose the ideals of the League of Nations, glorify the military, and see international cooperation as “the surrender of some divine rights”. Their nationalism contrasts with the ‘heathy patriotism’ of elementary school teachers. A third group, the Communists - with upper case ‘C’ - are a small sub-group among elementary school teachers who have ‘no patriotism’ and are more akin to the secondary school group than to the socialists ‘as to real ideals’<sup>49</sup>. His views of communism in his letters are negative and on the one occasion it is mentioned in the book, it is in the telling phrase ‘the blood-hued shade of the revolutionary communists’.

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<sup>49</sup> ~~In the same letter he describes in more detail than in the book and with warm approval what he had seen in Austria and in particular in Vienna with respect to new schools and the wider reforms in housing, health care and hygiene and it was surprising “to see that socialism actually in the harness is finding a practical way of realizing a great many of those ideals that we have always regarded as American, but to be realized only in Heaven or after many centuries.” On the other hand he is very critical of what he heard from ‘clerical schools’ in France: “I realize that my reaction of astonishment is perhaps naïve, but it was something of a shock to find that the church, for the sake of maintaining its own international power, is glad to set nations against each other by teaching in each chauvinistic nationalism full of hate and by developing scepticism of such international agencies as now exist for promoting a pacific solution of international difficulties.” This material did not appear in the book.~~

The fear of Communism is present in the only substantial review of Prescott's book, in the same year as its publication (1930). The author, Harold D. Lasswell of the University of Chicago, makes one negative comment in an otherwise very favourable reading<sup>20</sup>:

Prescott's eye for social realism seems singularly blind to the problem presented by Communism. He speaks in favor of the "scientific attitude" in contrast with the inculcation of "predetermined attitudes." But his mind is so full of concern for attitudes favorable toward the League of Nations that he is able to ignore Communism. (1930: 481)

This juxtaposition of favour for the League of Nations with the ability to "ignore Communism" (with a perhaps significant capitalisation) suggests that Lasswell thinks that the former is a cause of the latter. It is a symptom of the change in attitudes to the League of Nations which was beginning to happen at the turn of the decade, just as the book was published. The 'threat' of communism was growing in the perception of many people, and quickly. Lasswell goes on:

[Prescott] comments approvingly on German elementary education as a combatant for the destructive ideology of Communism, but he has no genuine hearing for the Communists to offer in his teaching program. Just how vividly is the Communist challenge to the Western World to be presented to the youth in the schools? Will there be opportunity for prolonged and fair minded consideration of this challenge? And just how early are pupils to have these "unsettling" experiences? (1930: 481)

It is however difficult to see what he meant by "He comments approvingly on German elementary education as a combatant for the destructive ideology of Communism" since there is no use of the word "communism" or "communist" in the book. As we have seen there is approval of 'socialism' and Lasswell may have taken this to mean or include communism. It is nonetheless difficult to see what Lasswell means by reference to "German elementary education as a combatant". Prescott's analysis of German education in Chapter 3 makes no reference to anything which might have stimulated Lasswell's comment and the latter may in fact be transposing factors external to the text.

In his final analysis in Chapter 10 "Educational Implications", Prescott is optimistic about the direction of education he has observed, especially in elementary schools. He is clearly in favour of the progress brought by socialism but is against revolution:

Although I recognize that much of tradition is a heavy drag on progress, I believe that no educator should advocate social changes that would produce chaos, because the suffering that chaos entails robs the generation that must live in it of the opportunity to experience the joy of life as fully as its sorrow and hence produce distorted

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<sup>20</sup> He concludes his review with high praise: "Professor Prescott has written an uncommonly stimulating monograph on a matter of the greatest moment. His work is good enough to invite comparison with the best that social science has to offer." (1930: 481)

personalities. For this reason educators must seek to provide for the orderly evolution of society and to avoid stagnation or revolution (p. 130-131)

He is aware that this may seem naïve but emphasises the power of rationalisation and the analysis of psychological and social forces to overcome current practices, and places his faith in developing ‘the scientific attitude’ in pupils and ‘de-emotionalizing’ the study of international problems.

## **Conclusion**

Daniel Prescott was trained as a psychologist and brought a highly conscious scientific psychological perspective to his observations and analysis of schools in Europe. He also brought the great energy which procured him interviews with leading educationists, with teachers and with education administrators. He observed widely and at a time of significant developments and change in European education. His book was praised by his reviewer and remains a fascinating read today. For his argument is clear and well founded on the psychological theory of conditioning which he brings with some originality to the analysis of the influences on education systems. It is also evident and explicit from the beginning that he set out with the very specific hope - today we would perhaps refer to his ‘hypothesis’ - of tracing change from chauvinistic education to an internationally oriented education which would maintain peace in Europe. The power of hindsight undermines Prescott’s optimism. The traces of evolution he found in some schools in Europe were stopped in the following decade, not least in Austria and Germany where the Kantoreks again dominated the classroom.

In my analysis of his text I have focused on his observations and understanding of ‘internationalism’ which, in contrast to his psychological perspective, is not theorised; he does not refer to political theory or historical analysis of internationalism. He is simply reflecting the discourse and concepts of the period in which he was writing, the structure of feeling that there was an urgent need for educational change, for a shift from chauvinist patriotism in education to a patriotic education which introduced the ability to understand the patriotism of others and simultaneously cooperate with them for a common good. His sensitivity as external observer - both in the book and in his letters - provide an account of education in Europe of the 1920s and the internationalist thinking which began to introduce change.

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## **Appendix**

### **PRESCOTT’S ITINERARY – based on letters to Holmes and Wilson**

- arrived in London 12 Sept 1926

- arrived Geneva 21 November 1926

- left Geneva 22 January 1926

- “on March 16<sup>th</sup> we move to Vienna for a stay of three weeks” but later says “24 days at Vienna”

- (on 22 April 1927) “we have now been at Prague for ten days”

- (20 May 1927) “a little over two weeks in Prague”, “nearly three weeks in Dresden” plans “one month in Berlin” and then to Paris “for a final assembly of our material” and “hope to arrive in Boston about July 1<sup>st</sup>”